

# **SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA**

**Summary on  
Twelfth Chapter**

**by  
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## SUMMARY (TWELFTH CHAPTER)

- Note: 1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.  
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

(The eleventh chapter has paved the way for *virāḍ-bhakti*. So, in the twelfth chapter, the Lord deals with all aspects of *bhakti* leading to liberation.)

The chapter begins with *Arjuna*'s question seeking to know whether *virāḍ-bhaktā* (*saguṇabhaktā*) or *akṣara-bhaktā* (*nirguṇabhaktā*) is superior (1).

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* first answers that *saguṇabhaktā* is superior. (In fact, we cannot compare them. Everyone has to go through both and one can reach the Lord through *nirguṇabhakti* alone, which the Lord himself points out in the 4th verse. Still the Lord praises *saguṇabhaktā* because of the context.) (2)

From the 3rd verse to the 12th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives out the entire range of *bhakti* which leads to liberation. In the first three verses (3 to 5) *Kṛṣṇa* talks about *nirguṇabhakti* which is *jñānayoga* and which is the direct means for liberation. But, the Lord points out that this will be difficult for unprepared people (5).

From the 6th verse to the 8th verse, the Lord speaks about the next lower stage in the form of *virāḍ-upāsanā*. He promises that such *upāsaka* will be rescued from *samsāra* by the Lord. (This does not mean that a *virāḍ-upāsaka* can get liberation, skipping *jñānayoga*. The idea is that he becomes fit for *jñānayoga* and attains liberation through knowledge.)

In the 9th verse, the Lord comes one more step down. If one is incapable of *virāḍ-upāsanā*, let him practice meditation on any form of the Lord (*iṣṭadevatā-upāsanā*). Thus, *upāsanā* (on *virāḍ* or *iṣṭadevatā*) becomes the preparatory step for *jñānayoga*.

In the next verse (10th), the Lord comes down further. If a person is too extrovert to take up *upāsana*, he is asked here to perform his duty (*nitya* and *naimittika*) as an offering to the Lord (*Īśvarārpaṇam*) without expecting any reward.

When a person is full of desires, he is impelled to do desire-born actions (*kāmya*) expecting results. For such a person *Kṛṣṇa* prescribes the last step. When he receives the result of *kāmya-karmas*, let him take it as a *prasāda* (graceful gift) of the Lord and avoid reaction. *Kṛṣṇa* indicates this through the word '*sarvakarmaphalatyaṅgam*' (11).

The above two steps come under *karmayoga*. (A *karmayogi* becomes fit for *upāsana* after some time. *Upāsana* makes him qualified for *jñānayoga*. *Jñāna* helps him discover his own true ever-free nature.)

*Kṛṣṇa* concludes this topic by praising the last step of *karmayoga* (12).

From the 13th verse up to the 19th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a clear picture of the characteristics of one who has gone through all these steps and discovered fulfillment. [As a *karmayogi* and *upāsaka* he was a devotee of *saguṇa-īśvara*, seeing the Lord as distinct from him. This is only lower *bhakti*, because he does not know the true nature of the Lord still (Refer VII-17). His *bhakti* is *saguṇabhakti* or *bhedabhakti* or *aparā bhakti*. Once he pursues *jñānayoga* and discovers his identity with the Lord, his *bhakti* becomes *nirguṇabhakti* or *abhedabhakti* or *parā bhakti*, which is an end in itself.] In these verses *Kṛṣṇa* describes the traits of a *parabhakta* who is a *sthitaprajña* (Refer II-55 to 72). (This serves twofold purpose. Firstly, it is an inspiration for a seeker to pursue his *sādhana*. Secondly, the natural traits of a *parabhakta* serve as values for a *sādhaka* to be deliberately practised.)

This portion can be broadly divided into two. One referring to those virtues which a *parabhakta* spontaneously enjoys, and the second, referring to those negative traits which he is totally free from.

## SUMMARY

We can enlist them as follows:

### ***Parabhakta* is endowed with:**

1. *Maitrī* (Friendliness) [13]
2. *Karuṇā* (Compassion) [13]
3. *Samatvam* (Equanimity) [13]
4. *Kṣamā* (Forbearance) [13]
5. *Santuṣṭi* (Contentment) [14]
6. *Yatātmav*  
(Self-control) [14]
7. *Dṛḍhaniścaya*  
(Firm Self-knowledge) [14]
8. *Bhakti* (Devotion) [14]
9. Gentleness [15]
10. *Śucitvam* (Purity) [16]
11. *Dakṣatvam*  
(Resourcefulness) [16]
12. *Udāsīnatvam*  
(Impartiality) [16]

### ***Parabhakta* is free from:**

1. *Dveṣa* (Hatred) [13]
2. *Mamakāra*  
(‘Mine’-notion) [13]
3. *Ahaṅkāra* (‘I’-notion) [13]
4. *Udvega* (Anxiety) [15]
5. *Harṣa* (Elation) [15]
6. *Amarṣa* (Envy) [15]
7. *Bhayam* (Fear) [15]
8. *Apekṣā* (Dependence) [16]
9. *Ārambha* (Selfish action) [16]
10. *Śoka* (Grief) [17]
11. *Kāṅkṣā* (Desire) [17]
12. Pairs of opposites [17,18,19]  
(comfort and discomfort,  
honour and dishonour, etc.)

*Kṛṣṇa* concludes the teaching by saying — “Those who follow this teaching with faith, keeping Me as the goal, are very dear to Me.”(20)

## SUMMARY

Thus the main topics in this chapter are:

1. *Arjuna's* question and *Kṛṣṇa's* answer.....1 , 2
2. The five stages of *bhakti* (*prasāda**buddhi*,  
*īśvarārpaṇabuddhi*, *īṣṭadevatā-upāsanā*,  
*virāḍ-upāsanā* and *akṣara-upāsanā* viz.  
*jñānayoga*).....3 to 12
3. Traits of *parabhakta* (*parabhaktalakṣaṇa*) .....13 to 19
4. Glory of the teaching.....20

Since this chapter talks about all stages of *bhakti*, this is called '*Bhaktiyoga*'.

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